

Samoan Ceremonials

E. W. Pickara



ADMINISTERING THE OATH TO THE KING

WITH the mild persistence characteristic of their race, the natives of Samoa have declined to permit the white man to abolish the habits and customs that developed in their beautiful islands during the long centuries before the conquering stranger came. They have dropped their primitive religion and become Christians—on the surface, at least. The "mission girls" allow themselves to be clad from neck to heel in white "Mother Hubbards" and in Apla all the women wear some scanty covering for the upper part of the body, though none of them will put on shoes and stockings except while attending church. But in most other respects these lovely brown people live as they always have lived.

This is notably true concerning the ceremonies, those of daily observance as well as those which mark some great occasion. It was my good fortune to be in Samoa at a time when it was possible to witness various ceremonials not often seen. Malletoa was recently dead, Mataafa was elected king by a majority of the people and Tanu had been chosen by the minority and, what was more important, by the Protestant missionaries. From all parts of the little archipelago the adherents of Mataafa had assembled on Mullnuu Point, just outside Apla, and there took place almost daily some decidedly picturesque doings.

Biggest and best of these, naturally, was the coronation of the white-haired old chief, though the word is a misnomer for there was no crown. Mataafa sat alone in the center of a large open space, and all around, in the shelter of palms and banana trees, were thousands of natives and the entire white population of Upola Island. The king's own house was turned over to the consuls, naval officers and other distinguished persons. When all was ready five ancient "talking men" representing the chief districts, advanced until within a hundred feet of Mataafa and delivered long addresses to him upon his duties as ruler, concluding with the administering of what passed for the oath of office. The king replied with utmost dignity, rising to speak, and the talking men thereupon closed in on him and anointed his head with a sacred oil. His majesty then retired amid the loud cheers of his people, and the rest of the afternoon and the evening was given up to feasting. The innocent revelries were not lessened by the fact that bloody war was imminent. On the other side of the town were encamped the forces of Tanu, and to precipitate the conflict there was needed only the decision of the white judge of the supreme court that Mataafa's election was invalid. That came later, and so did the fighting.

Next day we all went out again to see a "talo," or food procession. Once more Mataafa sat in state, and before him filed his subjects, a long line of men, women and children. Leading the delegation from each district or village was its special taupo, the maiden who is designated official hostess of her village and who retains the office until her marriage. She was attired only in the old-time lava lava, or skirt of bark cloth, and her ornaments consisted of flowers, wreaths and plenty of palm oil. Chanting some ancient song in archaic language, she danced in advance of the slowly moving and chanting procession for some fifty yards and then waited until the talking men who led it reached her side. This was repeated all along the beautiful pathway until the "throne" was reached. As each person passed the king he or she tossed in a heap before his majesty some article of food. One might bring a live pig, trussed up but squealing; another a squawking fowl, or a fine fish wrapped in fresh leaves; another a huge bunch of bananas, or a basket of pineapples. But not one was without his offering, even if it was but a breadfruit or a piece of taro. So, dancing and singing, the parade passed, and then, without any sense of the ridiculous, broke up, turned back and helped the king eat up all the gifts. That was indeed a monster feast.

Perhaps the people ate up Mataafa's food with the less compunction because they knew how abstemious he was. One morning I called on his majesty by appointment and found him at his breakfast. The royal meal consisted of a bowl of kava and two bananas, big purple ones of a variety not known here; and the king courteously offered to share the fruit with me. Grave, wise-looking and big physically, mentally and morally, Mataafa sat there cross-legged in his simple hut and chatted with me about his loved friend, Robert Louis Stevenson, munching his banana and driving away the flies with his fly-tapper. He was a true nobleman and his death last summer deserved more than the four-line



SAMOAN GIRL IN WEDDING ATTIRE



TUPO AND TALKING NEW LEADING THE TALOLO



SAMOAN GIRLS MAKING KAVA

notice I received in the newspapers. Perhaps the German papers paid some tribute to his memory, for the Germans in Samoa, though they could not maintain him on the throne against the Americans and the British, recognized his worth by making him high chief of German Samoa after the partition of the islands.

The making and drinking of kava is a daily ceremony of the Samoan household. Kava is their ordinary beverage, but there is never any relaxation of the formal etiquette connected with its consumption. It is made and served usually quite early in the morning. Already the members of the family have taken their daily bath in the sea or, preferably, in a stream or fresh water pool, and the women have dressed their abundant black locks. The big wooden kava bowl is taken down from the hut post and the maidens prepare the dried root of the piper methusticum. Formerly they chewed it after carefully rinsing out their mouths, but in later times it usually is grated. One of the girls sits in front of the bowl and pours water upon the kava, meanwhile stirring it with a mass of fibrous root which serves as a strainer. This from time to time she tosses over her shoulder to another girl, who shakes from it the debris and throws it back into the bowl. Every motion, the stirring, the tossing, the shaking, is done in a stated way that must not vary.

Finally the drink is brewed and the fact is announced by the clapping of hands. This is a general invitation to everyone within hearing to enter and participate, and the sound is a welcome one to the thirsty wayfarer. Neighbor and stranger are alike welcome. When all are seated in a circle as large as the house permits, the maiden who made the kava proceeds to serve it. Filling to the brim the polished, thin shell of a half a coconut, she sends it by another girl to the member of the household or the guest who is highest in rank. He receives the shell in both hands, and with the salutation "manuia"—good health and fortune—empties it at a single draught. To remove the cup from the lips before it is empty is a serious breach of etiquette. The newcomer in the islands finds this somewhat of a task, for at first kava is not a delectable beverage, tasting much like soapuds. But the liking for the drink grows rapidly and one soon admits that it is both refreshing and delightful.

Having emptied his cup of kava, the drinker returns the shell to the maiden by spinning it across the floor, never by the hand of the girl who brought it to him. My first attempt to do this sent the cup so far wide of the mark that it altogether upset the gravity of the occasion and covered me with confusion.

Not only in the morning does the kava drinking take place. It marks all important events or conferences, and once it was my privilege to be present when every single point of old-time etiquette was rigidly observed, even to the chewing of the kava root by the maidens. I had carried to Mullnuu an important bit of information for the Mataafa leaders—a tip that the British were to land a party of marines to search the point for weapons—and while the guns were being hastily concealed in the bush or carried aboard canoes, the leaders were assembled to discuss the news. As they talked three really handsome taupo maidens prepared the kava in the good old-fashioned way, and so nicely was it done that I had no desire to decline the cup even

If common courtesy had not demanded that I accept it without hesitation.

Perhaps in writing of ceremonies the marriage ceremony should not be omitted. But that rite, as we know it, really is omitted by the Samoans, except those who have been educated by the missionaries. The latter always demand a "mission marriage," but other natives still are satisfied with the ancient forms, which consist in the main of an exchange of presents and a feast. Divorce with them is even easier, for the dissatisfied one merely leaves his or her mate. But while the marriage is in force the Samoan sets an example to more civilized peoples in the matter of conjugal faithfulness. Lack of dress does not necessarily mean laxity of morals, the opinion of the casual tourist to the contrary notwithstanding.

HOW ANIMALS LIVE IN WINTER.

Winter is coming, and the wild creatures in the north are preparing for the cold months. Some, like the squirrel, store up food, but many more go to bed to sleep through the cold days when food is scarce. This winter sleep is called hibernation.

Each animal chooses some comfortable place for its long rest. The woodchuck rolls up in a burrow in the hillside; the coon and bear find caves among the rocks. Many of the warm-blooded animals do not sleep all winter, but take long naps from which they awaken on warm days.

The cold-blooded creatures hibernate, too. Snakes knot themselves up under a log or rock; toads, wood frogs and tortoises push down in the soft earth; mud turtles and water frogs bury themselves in the bottom of shallow streams and ponds.

They all sleep until hunger wakes them, and the first thing they do in the spring is to hunt for a good meal.

If you want to see something hibernate it is easy to keep a box tortoise or a water turtle all winter, in a box of earth and moss with a pan of water at one side.

Before they go to sleep don't forget to feed them every two or three days bits of raw meat or earthworms. They do not care to eat every day and are able to go a long time without food.

A box tortoise which a boy has had in the house for two years went to sleep the first winter just as though he were out in the cold, but the second winter he only took short naps and had become so tame he would eat out of the hand.—Mabel R. Goodlander in the Churchman.

A Slight Mistake.

"What are you doing here? I should not think such an out-and-out horseman as you would find pleasure in a musical farce."

"I don't care anything about the farce. I came to see the ponies they said were in the piece."

Mutual Distrust.

"You wouldn't tell a trusting girl things you didn't mean, would you?"

"No, indeed," he answered. "Say, you wouldn't ring in a dictograph on a fellow, would you now?"—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Superfluous.

"Why does a ship have to have an anchor?"

"To keep her fast when she is at a port or where she wants to stop."

"But doesn't she always keep her hold?"

IDENTIFICATION OF AMERICAN WOODS RECENTLY BECOME GREATLY EMPHASIZED

User's Need of Reliable Means of Recognizing Commercial Timber Increases Because of Demand for Standard Species—Many Expensive Lawsuits Result From Controversies.

(By G. B. SUDWORTH.)

The wood user's need of a reliable means of recognizing commercial woods has become greatly emphasized in recent years because of the enormous demand for standard kinds and species of woods. This increased use is necessitating, in some cases, the substitution of similar or entirely different woods for many of the well-known and long-used ones, the supplies of which no longer meet the demand.

Some of the substitutes offered are as good as standard timbers, while others are inferior to them. However this may be, the frequent discovery by consumers that they have not received the woods ordered has led to a great many difficulties and to serious controversies involving expensive lawsuits.

In many instances manufacturers believe that in substituting, for example, the woods of several different species of the white oak for that of the true white oak, they are doing no injustice to purchasers, and this belief is reasonably supported by facts. Much depends upon the uses made of the timber.

No one could deny that for some purposes the woods of the con oak, overcup oak, post oak, bur oak and

stant work has made him familiar, his knowledge of other woods is necessarily limited. Confronted with the necessity of distinguishing the few oak woods he knows from a larger number of different species, the characters he has long and safely relied upon are often insufficient because they may be common to the wood of some of the oaks with which he is unfamiliar. Thus a carefully selected, well-seasoned piece of water oak (Q. nigra) may be so similar in color and general appearance to some grades of white oak as to deceive not a few unacquainted with the structural characteristics of all our oaks.

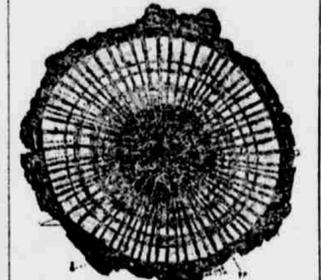
Another difficulty that may be encountered by one who depends entirely upon an empirical knowledge of woods is to prove his convictions regarding the identity of a wood. For want of exact knowledge of the anatomical characteristics of the wood in question, he can only insist upon his opinion. It happens in actual practice that one inspector passes as white oak a shipment composed of white oak, black oak and red oak, and his judgment is challenged by another inspector, yet in such an event neither is able to do more than assert his opinion.

It must not be understood that a study of the structural characters of woods always renders identification easy. It is sometimes extremely difficult to find characters that distinguish the woods of closely related trees, which may be abundantly distinct in their flowers, fruit and foliage. It is comparatively easy to point out simple characters which distinguish oak from other woods. Moreover, it is not difficult to find characters that will separate the white oaks (annual fruiting species) from the black and red oaks (biennial fruiting species). The task, however, of pointing out easily observed distinctions that can be relied upon to separate the woods of different species of white oaks, black oaks and red oaks is difficult, and, in a few instances, impossible without the aid of the high magnifying power of a compound microscope. This is because some of the minute structural characters easily demonstrated when grossly magnified cannot be seen under the low magnifying power of a simple pocket lens.

Of the approximately 300 different species of oaks known in the world about 53 occur within the United States. Thirty-five include all of the commercially useful ones and a number of which are likely to become more or less useful in the future. The remaining fifteen species are of inferior quality or the trees occur in such limited quantities as to be of little or no economic importance.

Selecting Seed Corn.

The state of Minnesota has taken official notice of the idea of better seed corn, and the governor set aside a week in which the farmers were asked to go one day into their fields and choose their seed corn for next year.



Blue Oak. The Rate of Growth of This Tree Requires From Fifteen to Twenty Years to Grow One Inch in Diameter.

swamp white oak are as good as that of white oak. But the substitution, for example, of the somewhat similar black and red oaks for true white oak is less easily defended, because these substitutes are very different in quality from any of the white-oak woods.

With numerous oaks, therefore, as with many other woods, the consumer has occasion to distinguish, such superficial characters as color, feel, odor, hardness, weight, etc., cannot be depended upon alone as distinctive, because they vary not only with the age of the tree but also according to the soil in which the tree grew and the season and manner of cutting. The butt log differs from the top log, the heartwood from the sapwood, and the wood of a rapidly grown tree from that of a less rapidly grown one of the same species.

While the practical woodworker recognizes the woods with which con-

AYRSHIRE IS EXCELLENT MILK PRODUCER



In quantity of milk produced, Ayrshires will probably rank next to the Holstein-Friesian. The cows owned by the Wyoming Agricultural college averaged last year something over 8,000 pounds a piece, while herds averaging better than 6,000 pounds are not uncommon. In percentage of butter fat, the breed stands between the Holstein and the Jersey or Guernsey, 3.6 to 4.5 per cent covering the bulk of the fluctuation. The fat globules are small and the milk makes an excellent quality of cheese.

The cattle are extremely hardy and good rustlers, often winning out where other breeds would have difficulty in gaining a foothold. They are rather slow in coming to maturity, but their period of usefulness is a long one. Crossed on common stock, they show marked prepotency and materially improve the milking qualities of the offspring.